RAPA NUI'S SEA CREATURES

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The petroglyphs of Rapa Nui are intriguing for their variety of design motifs and their complexity. In *The Rock Art of Easter Island* (1992), I described and illustrated many varieties of "sea creature" images to be found in the island's rock art. Due to space constraints, not all recorded examples were included in that publication, and subsequent archaeological work has uncovered a few others. Recently, I encountered two books describing fishes of the Marquesas and Hawai'i (Chester et al. 1998; Titcomb and Pukui 1952), and some unresolved matters relating to Easter Island's sea menagerie were brought forth. In one instance, I erroneously cited two dolphin images, calling them swordfish (Lee 1992:Fig 5.34); Dr John Randall of the Bishop Museum kindly assisted with the identification of those, as well as some other fish motifs.

When compared to birdman motifs, Makemake faces, and *komari* designs (vulva forms), sea forms comprise a relatively small percentage of the island's total. Out of some 4000 petroglyphs (not counting cupules), only 264 represent denizens of the ocean. The numbers, however, may not reflect importance. Some petroglyphs depicting sea creatures are very large and complex and many were carved with great care and effort, including double outlining. In many instances, the natural model is clear: whales look like whales, sharks look like sharks, turtles look like turtles. But some are generic "fish" with little distinguishing features. Another group combines fish forms and human attributes, possibly to give the images a supernatural gloss. Some of the latter still are connected to island legends, as described in Lee (1990; 1992) and Lee and Ika (1999).

When compared to the rock art of other Polynesian islands, Easter Island stands out: Rapa Nui's sea creatures are without parallel elsewhere in Polynesia.

The sites that include petroglyphs of sea creatures are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Map of Rapa Nui showing the locations of rock art sites mentioned in the text and that contain petroglyphs of fishes and other sea creatures.

Rapa Nui's Surrounding Waters

The seas that surround Rapa Nui are relatively impoverished. This is due to the small size of the island, limited habitat, and the isolation of the island (Randall and Cea 1984:5). Because of the ocean's westward currents, one would expect Easter Island's shore fishes to be eastern Pacific in origin, but of 29 species, 21 are tropical Indo-Pacific species (or related to them). The others are related to fishes from Norfolk Island, Kermadec, and Australia. All of these locations are 5000 miles or more to the west (Randall 1970).

Randall and Cea (1984) identified 115 species in Easter Island's waters, with the largest family being the wrasses (labridae) with nine species, and the morays (muraenidae) with seven species. DiSalvo et al: 1988 recorded 163 species of fish belonging to 65 families. Recently, Garcia (2000) reported more than 160 species. The most common are Indo-Pacific (27%), endemic (26%) and pelagic (17%).

Petroglyphs of Sea Creatures

Many of the fish petroglyphs can be identified by species. Shark, whale, octopus and turtle are clear. Tuna can often be recognized although many of the other fish designs are so generic that a definite identification is difficult. Several are notable in that the internal bone structure is indicated. The petroglyphs vary as to expertise of carving. Some clearly were carved by experts and are deeply grooved; others are shallow and rather sketchily made, leaving their actual intent unclear. It is possible that some may be unfinished.

To determine the intention of an artist is difficult. It is a challenge to decide whether a curved shape was intended to represent an eel, for example, or it is only a curved shape. Some motifs, while having "fish" attributes, leave us little to go on; they may have a fish head or tail, but are so loosely depicted that they might be just about anything – rather of a fishy Rorschach test (Figure 2).

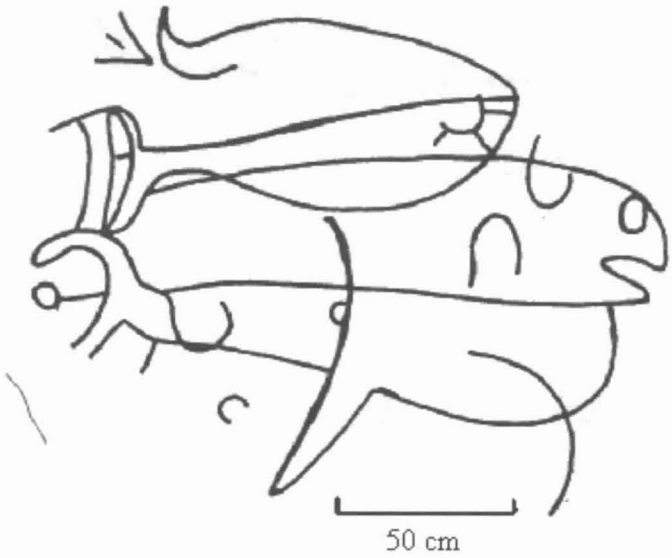

Figure 2. While these petroglyphs from Hanga Oteo are of fishes or whales, they are so loosely depicted that they are difficult to securely place into any particular category. Note associated fishhooks.

For example, some fish motifs may have one fin, and some have a line down the center. Figure 3 is an example from an area inland from Ahu Ra'ai (La Pérouse Bay). The outside line contains one or two other, perhaps earlier, fish shapes. Fishhooks are associated.

Taking the images in categories, this paper discusses petroglyphs of shark, rudderfish, tuna, whale/dolphin, octopus, turtle, seal, eel, crab, and needlefish.

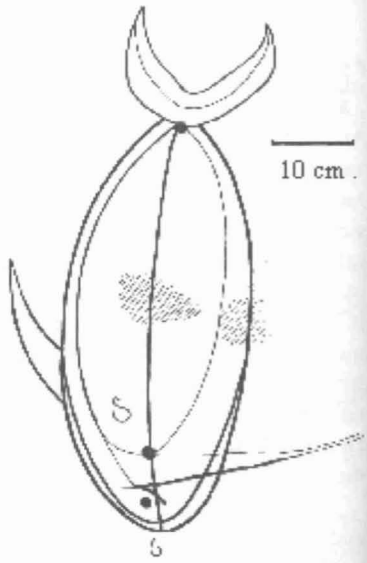

Figure 3. Fish from the La Pérouse area has several 'outlines', a center line, and is associated with cupules. Note small fishhook inside body area as well as at the head.

Shark (niūhi or mangō)

There are only a few images of sharks on Easter Island, but these are clearly distinguishable, with distinctive tail and fin (Lee 1992: Figures 4:58; 4:59). One of these motifs has another fish (or baby shark?) shown inside the body.

Easter Island legends describe shark as embodying the god Tangaroa (Fydorova 1977) or as being part *aku aku* spirit and thus particularly dangerous to men. These creatures were called *niūhi.* According to Randall and Cea (1984:7), Rapanui have specific names for different kinds of sharks. Thresher sharks (alopiidae) are *kāve'u*; whale sharks are *mamatua niūhi*; requiem sharks (carcharhinidae) are called *mangō*; hammerheads (sphyrnidae) are *māngo hamara*; dogfish sharks (squalidae) are *mangō tara;* lizardfishes (synodontidae) are *pāpa hakatara*.

Islanders claim that shark was not eaten in former times (Lee 1992:79), but some families do eat shark today (Figure 5). In earlier days, sharks that were caught were relieved of their liver (for the oil) and then discarded, and shark vertebrae

Figure 4. Shark and tuna carved near Ahu Ra'ai, La Pérouse Bay area. The tuna has numerous body lines; the shark has distinctive fins. Drawing by Paul Horley, 2003.

Figure 5. The jaw from a tiger shark is held aloft by Rapanui islander Lucia Riroroko whose family caught it. Tiger sharks are rare in Rapa Nui waters. When asked what the family did with the rest of the shark, the reply was "we ate it". Photo by Eric Hochberg.

were (and are) used for the eyes of small wood-carvings (Kurze 1997:33). Eyes made from shark vertebrae are known as "supernatural" eyes, as distinguished from eyes that are painted on (as are the eyes of some carvings in the island's church) (ibid.:56).

Images of sharks on Easter Island may refer to legendary events or have symbolic meaning. For example, shark can be a metaphor for the Milky Way for, in other parts of Polynesia, the Milky Way represented the "great shark in the sky" (Williamson 1924:I:239). We may assume the Rapanui also considered sharks as metaphor.

Legends about sharks are found also in the Marquesas, where one describes Taka'oa [Tangaroa] in the form of a shark. When hooked by a fisherman, he overturned the island of Fatu Uku (Suggs 1961:1550). Large sharks in the Marquesas are called *mako*; small sharks are called *moko*. The Marquesans used shark teeth for cutting and carving, and used sharkskin for polishing wood objects. The tiger shark is called *mano vakovako*. (Chester et al.:1998:109-110).

In Hawai'i, *niūhi* refers to a species of man-eating shark that was feared by islanders. *Niūhi* in Hawaii was the white shark, *carcharodon carcharis*, or the tiger shark, *galeocherdo cuvieri* (Hobson and Chave 1973:9). There are references to the eyes of this shark as being luminous at night: "*Niuhi* with fiery eyes that flamed in the deep blue sea". Kamehameha I used human flesh as bait in order to capture *niūhi* (ibid.:8). Sharks were especially meaningful to Hawaiians who called them, in general, *manō.* More than other sea animals, sharks were worshipped in ancient times as *'aumākua* and believed to have had human origins…traced to aborted human fetuses that had been cast into the sea (see Beckwith 1917). The fetus was believed to return to its family as an *'aumākua*, spiritually embodied in the form of a shark (Hobson and Chave 1973:3). Thereafter, members of the family, including descendants, worshipped sharks as *'aumākua* and did not eat shark meat (ibid.).

Although sharks are no longer as plentiful in Rapa Nui waters, islanders tell of past shark attacks and, until a few years ago, a board from a local fishing boat, full of shark teeth, was on display at the *caleta.* This attack came about as fishermen tried to fight off a shark that was attacking a tuna caught on their line. The shark then attacked the boat, enabling the men to swim away to safety on Motu Nui. The remains of the boat with embedded shark teeth was later recovered and put on display.

Rudderfish (nanue)

The importance of *nānue* on Rapa Nui can be seen by the many names that describe this fish in detail: *nānue* is the general name, but for smaller sizes, it is *nānue pua.* For *nānue* up to 10 centimeters, it is *nānue pua iti iti*; to 15 centimeters *nānue pua vaenga*; to 20 centimeters, it is *nānue pua mangungu ngungu*. A fish up to 30 cm is *nānue pua toki toki*; and to 40 cm *nānue kekeho*. In its common gray phase, it is *nānue hatu;* in its xanthic phase, *nānue para.* If yellow with brown spots, it is *nānue parea aku aku*; an albino is *nānue motea*, and a dark specimen with a white spot on the head is called *nānue puoko moni*. The latter is a term since the early 1900s (Randall and Cea 1984:11). *Nanue* is still considered the favorite fish among Rapanui islanders; it is caught from the shoreline cliffs by casting a line out into the surf.

The Hawaiian name for rudderfish is *nenue* (*Kyphosus cinerascens*). It is the only member of the family Kyphosiadae that is common in Hawaii's reefs. Most are gray but some have blotches of yellow and, rarely, one is all yellow. Early Hawaiians believed the yellow ones were protectors of the other *nenue* and called them *makua* (Hobson and Chave 1973:31). In ancient Hawai'i, *nenue* was in high demand, often reserved for chiefs, but it is not regarded as a food fish today in Hawai'i (ibid.).

Images of *nanue* are problematical in the rock carvings,

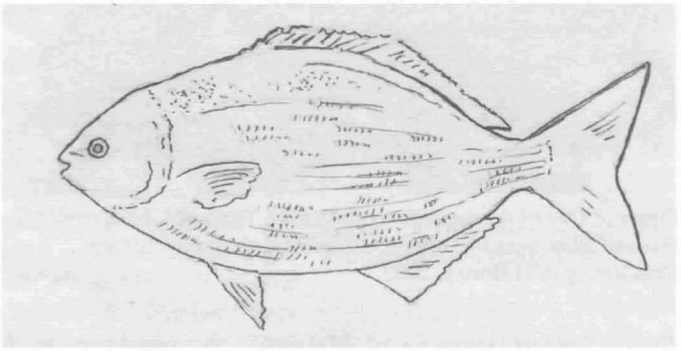

Figure 6. A sketch of a rudderfish (*nanue).* Drawing by the author.

as the fish lacks specific attributes that would cause it to stand out (Figure 6). It is possible that some "generic" fish petroglyphs may have been intended to represent *nanue* (Lee 1992: Figure 4.63; lower right corner).

Tuna (kahi)

Randall and Cea (1984:12) list three names for tuna: *kahi matatata*; *kahi ave ave*; and *kahi mea;* and Métraux (1971:174-182) describes the special fishhooks that traditionally were made for taking *kahi.* The earliest were made of stone. Legends describe that fishing was only successful after fishermen leaned to make hooks from human thigh bones, particularly that of a deceased fisherman. By 1868, when

Palmer visited the island, iron fishhooks were in use. To catch tuna, small *ature* fish were used as bait.

Specialists (*tangata rava ika ma'a*) fished for the *ariki henua* and other high status persons. These fishermen likely made their own specialized gear such as the stone fishhooks used in deep water tuna fishing. Only the fishhook for taking tuna, *mangai kahi*, has a specific association with the name of the fish (Ayres 1979:68).

The finest rock art images of tuna are found at Tongariki and at Hau Koka (Rano Kau). The Hau Koka tuna (Lee 1992: Figure 5.42) is carved on a large sloping boulder. The fish has a central dividing line, gill slits, a double circle eye and long fins. This fine carving is in association with other sea creatures (see below, "needlefish"). The four tuna images at Tongariki have interesting details: one has lines indicating bone structure and fins; two are associated with long lines of cupules that run along or through the fish bodies and one has horizontal lines that run along the body (Figure 7) (ibid.: Figures 4:65; 4:134; 6:20). The example with the horizontal lines is similar to a large tuna at Ahu Ra'ai (Figure 4).

One tuna image at Omohe (Lee 1992: Figure 4:70) has a dividing centerline but is covered with additional motifs including *komari* [vulva form], Makemake faces and images of *hare paenga*. This particular panel also features a large turtle, covered with Makemake faces. The intensity of carving and poor condition of the *papa* makes this panel extremely difficult to see.

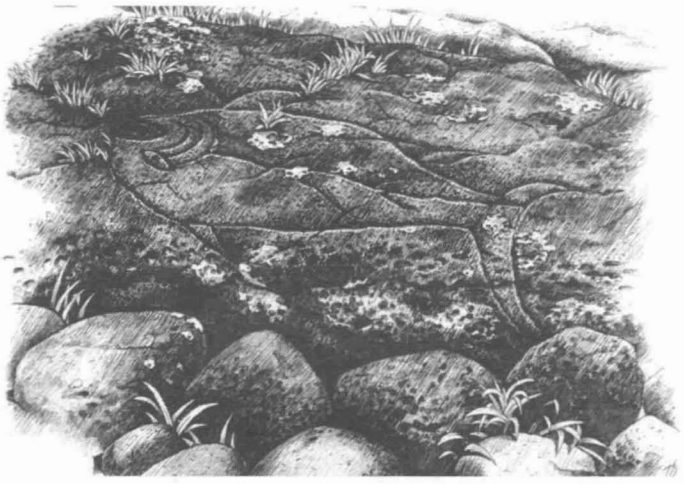

Figure 7. One of the tuna petroglyphs from Tongariki. Note center line and other lines that appear to represent the bone structure. Drawing by Paul Horley, 2003.

Curiously, we have in the corpus of designs, tail of tuna. Why the tail only was depicted is unknown. Although only four tuna tails are recorded, they are large and quite specific (Lee 1992: Figures 4.56; 4:57).

Needlefish (ihe aku)

One of the most beautiful petroglyph panels on the island is at Hau Koka, located in the crater at Rano Kau near the edge of the crater's lake. Here are elongated fish forms, presumed to be needlefish, plus birdmen and several other motifs, the meaning of which is not clear. The workmanship is especially fine (Figure 8).

Most designs at this site are of fish, including a large tuna (Lee 1992:5.42). There are also shallow man-made depressions or basins (*taheta*) worked into some of the smaller rocks, and these are, in some cases, associated with fish petroglyphs. One boulder has a birdman figure, and another birdman is carved amongst the fish shapes on the major boulder.

No archaeological studies have been done here so we cannot say what, if anything may have been associated with this site. There are no surface features to indicate any man-made structures or modifications other than the petroglyphs. What we have, basically, is a group of in-situ basalt boulders of varying sizes ranged around in a small area.

The main five-meter wide rounded boulder is the largest and contains the most complex designs, plus some modern graffiti. Designs swirl around the curves of the boulder; it is clear that the petroglyphs were carved to take full advantage of the shape of the rock.

Three very large elongated fish stand out on the side of the boulder. They may be trumpetfish, cornetfish or needlefish. According to John Randall (personal communication 2002), most likely they represent needlefish, which have a "bulb" shape that is very posterior on this species. Silvery slim needlefishes drift motionless near the ocean surface until currents carry them into schools of small fishes that they capture in their gaping jaws. Needlefish (*Platybelone argalus platyura*) are called "*ihe ngarara*" or "*ihe aku*" on the island (Randall and Cea 1984:8).

There is no ethnography that mentions needlefish as being caught by Rapanui fishermen, but Métraux (1971:189) notes that in the Marquesas special nets were used for catching needlefish; in the Tuamotus, needlefish were caught in traps.

The three large needlefish petroglyphs on the main boulder are executed in a rare technique of carving on Easter Island, known as intaglio. Two of the fishes have distinctive tail shapes with short fins, a bulge or bulb, and then the tail. The fish in the center of these three lacks the bulb/fin conformation, and has a centerline running partway up the figure's body. A birdman in outline form (not bas relief) is tucked under the curve of the figure at the top.

Other motifs on this basalt boulder include a bearded fish-like creature with human face, a possible seal and one fish-form that appears to have had its human head cut off. The latter surely must have illuminated some ancient legend, now long forgotten. The possible headless seal with the head shown nearby could be an illustration of the legend recorded by Métraux (1971:373), describing Tangaroa arriving to the island in the guise of a seal (see section below on *pakia*).

Two other elongated fish forms that are located on smaller, adjacent boulders at Hau Koka also represent needlefish. Their elegant stylized figures have beak-like mouths, prominent eyes, graceful fins (two sets each) and a fish tail. One has a central body line (Lee 1992: Figure 5.43) and is associated with cupules. The other is on a vertical surface just below an area with a *taheta* and five cupules (ibid.). Our informant, Felipe Teao, suggested that the larger depressions were used in the preparation of *mahute* (bark cloth). These fish forms, whether small or large, are not found in the petroglyphs elsewhere on the island.

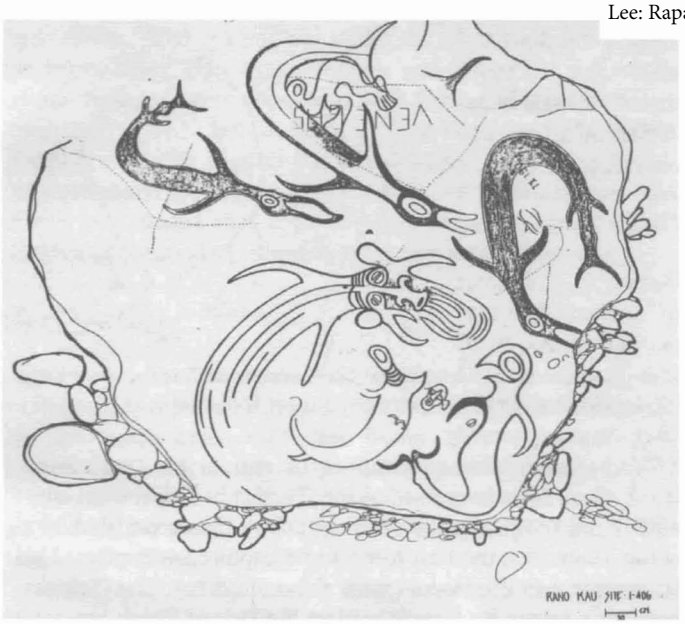

Figure 8. The petroglyph site at Hau Koka, at the edge of the lake, Rano Kau. Two of the three needlefish are carved in bas relief.

The bearded face at Hau Koka that ends in fishlike tendrils is similar to designs carved on the heads of some *kavakava* figures (Kurze 1997: Figure 3.3; Forment 1993: Figure 137). Forment (ibid.210-11) calls this "the 3-figured motif…composed of 3 similar beings with human faces drawn in downward view. The central subject's face ends with an oval addition, while with the two others this detail resembles a beak. Heads and bodies are formed by concentric curves. Heyerdahl (1975:182) interprets these creatures as anthropomorphic sea monsters; he sees them as whales with a bearded human face. However, we believe this latter detail is in fact only the representation – seen from above and in profile – of a cetacean's snout." The "bearded" figure under discussion has a human face with eyes, nose, nostrils and mouth, and ears. There are fin like projections below the ears and the "oval addition formed by concentric curves" (Forment 1993:210) or a "bearded human face" (Heyerdahl 1975:482) forms the lower part of the face. What this "beard" may represent in reality is undetermined, but it does resemble a flowing beard.

As this is a single petroglyph figure, it clearly does not correspond to the "3-figured motif" cited by Forment (1993: Figure 137) but, in other respects, it fits in well with her example. Another feature that is in variance is the tail, so prominently shown in the carved design from a *moai tangata* (ibid). The tail is lacking in the petroglyph; indeed the entire rest of the figure is not shown. Whether it was originally present and has eroded, or the figure left unfinished, we were unable to determine.

Finally, on a separate boulder at Hau Koka, there is a large birdman figure carved in outline form. It is holding an egg (ibid.:Figure 5.44). The birdman is carved in outline only, not in bas relief (bas relief is a common carving style for the birdman figures at Mata Ngarau, Orongo).

Whale (taoraha) and Dolphin

Whales may have been beyond the islanders' ability to hunt, but likely some washed ashore in the past or perhaps were observed at sea, for we see images in the rock art that surely suggest "whale" and there is a word for it in the Rapanui language.

We know that dolphin (delphinidae) were hunted at one time by the ancient Rapanui as their bones have been found in various excavations, and their image is carved into petroglyphs. However, this was at some time in the past, long enough ago for the name for this animal to be forgotten. While the Rapanui must have had a word for both dolphin and porpoise, when deep sea fishing was no longer possible, the word was lost. It is not found in any of the vocabularies, not even the oldest (Steven R. Fischer, personal communication, 2003.)

In Tahitian, the word for porpoise is *ʻōuʻa*. In the Marquesas, dolphin is *uʻua* and *paʻaoa* (the latter can also mean whale or large fish). A small porpoise is a *tohoa,* which could be *tohoʻa,* as "southern right whale" in Maori is *tōhora* (Steven R. Fischer, personal communication, 2003.)

Figure 9. Possible whale figure from Vai Atare, on vertical surface.

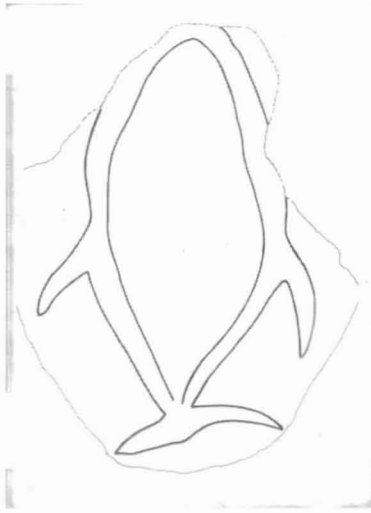

Figure 10. Two-meter long whale petroglyph from Hanga Oteo.

Worldwide, there are some 33 species of dolphin, but which were, at one time, in Rapa Nui waters is unknown. Three dolphin images are found in the rock art corpus: one is on a hillside above ʻAnakena (Lee 1992: Figure 4.73), and two are on the rim at Rano Kau. The latter were previously misidentified as swordfish (Lee 1992: Figure 5:34).

A whale image is located inside a cave at Ana o Keke (Lee 1992: Figure 4.2) and one is at Pua Tivaka (ibid: Figure 4.71), where the skeleton of the creature is indicated. This example is carved in double outline and with added curved flourishes, typical of the carving at this site.

One image at Mahatua appears to be a whale, although the tail is problematical (Lee 1992: Figure 4.53). It is possible that a faint petroglyph at Vai Atare may be of a whale breaching (Figure 9). This design is 1.1 meters high and is placed in an "up" position on a boulder. A larger whale petroglyph at

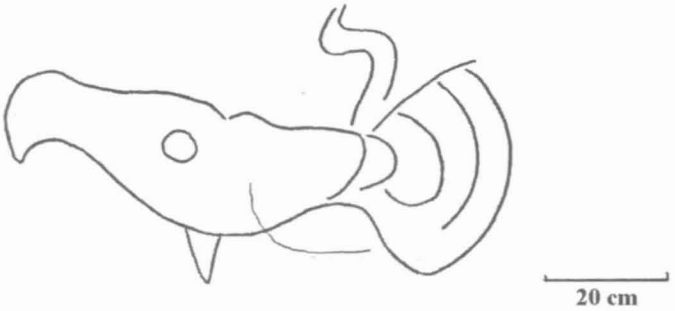

Figure 11. This likely represents an octopus. The motif is at the far end of the Poike peninsula at Papa Ui Hetu'u, the place where "the old men watched the stars" according to Routledge (1919:235). The site is associated with cupules and petroglyphs of fishhooks.

Hanga Oteo is carved in double outline but on flat *papa;* it is 2 meters long (Figure 10).

Octopus (heke)

Octopuses with short legs were called *heke puka* and those with long legs were *heke korotea*. They were caught with the bare hands (*hakapari*) along the shoreline by moonlight. Tradition states that, formerly, islanders built houses (*hare heke*) where the octopuses sought shelter; they were said to be driven into the shelters by magic (Métraux 1971:191).

Most octopus motifs are found on north coast from Poike to Ava o Kiri. The latter locale has a panel, called Vai o ko Piko by Routledge's informant, and it has octopuses plus other sea creatures (Lee 1992: Figure 4:63). The octopuses are finely carved with wavy tentacles and prominent eyes and they are carved to take advantage of the natural formations in the lava (Lee 1992:79). Nearby on the rocks near the cliff edge at Ovahe is a large and finely carved octopus form (ibid.: Figure 4.62).

At Orongo's "Complex A" are two designs that appear to be octopuses interacting with either fishes or perhaps with seals (Lee 1992: Figure 4.79). The forms drape over the curved shapes of the two boulders, making it impossible to see the design as a whole unit from one point of view. These petroglyphs are extremely eroded.

One octopus at Pua Tivaka near La Pérouse Bay has a human face and tendrils and is part of a larger panel that contains other fish forms as well as some canoes shapes (Lee 1992: Figure 4.72). Human faces on octopus forms are seen also at sites above 'Anakena. Called Dos Caras, they refer to a legend that is still told today on the island. Two separate panels refer to the same legend, depending upon which informant one consults. I previously referred to these as "sea creatures" and described them as being magical or mythical forms (Lee 1992: Figures 4.81 and 4.82). Regardless, these are basically octopuses, despite their human faces.

It is possible that the fish form in Figure 11 is an octopus, although in a different style than those at Ava o Kiri and other sites. This 85 cm long sea form is located at Papa ui Hetu'u at the tip of Poike peninsula and is associated with fishhook designs and cupules.

Forment (1993:211) cites the octopus motif carved on the heads of anthropomorphic sculpture and also on a *moai tangata moko*. She notes that octopus appears to be a materialization of an *aku aku* spirit.

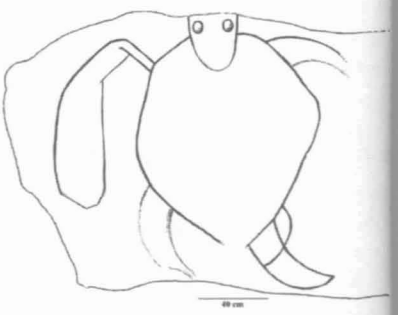

Figure 12. A simple outline defines a turtle petroglyph from Tongariki.

Turtle (honu)

Turtles in Polynesia are connected to royalty and special ritual practices (Lessa 1984; Emory 1947). They were reserved for kings and nobility and were sufficiently loaded with mana to substitute for a human sacrifice. Turtles in Tahiti were considered the "*ata*" (shadow) of the gods of the ocean (ibid:34). In the Tuamotus, the first turtle to be captured was offered to the gods at specific *marae*, with elaborate ritual. The Pleiades were represented by female turtles; the Belt of Orion by male turtles. When a particular star appeared in the sky, it was the time for turtles to arrive. It was the appearance of the Pleiades before the arrival of turtles that gave rise to the connection (Emory 1947:62). "Turtle watching" towers (*tupa*) on Easter Island puzzled Métraux (1971:189) who noted that the towers did not provide any better view of the sea, and suggested they were similar to fishermen shrines (*ko'a*) in the Hawaiian Islands. However, it was the stars that were being studied to determine the time when turtles were likely to come to the island.

Métraux (1971:372-3) recorded two Easter Island legends about turtle. One, called Veri-pupura-vai-a-pakia, described the arrival of a turtle to the island; the other called Uho and the Turtle, describes a magical turtle that carried off a girl on its back. A turtle legend relating to a petroglyphs site at Omohe is still told on the island. This is the legend of Moa Para's magical turtle and the tuna of Hera (Lee and Ika 1999:114-5). In the legend, the turtle is actually the god Makemake in disguise.

Some of the turtle images at Tongariki are particularly fine examples; two clearly show the shell plates and one has it's head protruding over a crack in the lava in such a way as to portray the head in relief (Lee 1992:Figure 4.65). Tongariki also has its simpler designs as is shown in Figure 12, in which the bare minimum delineates "turtle".

Turtle images are prominent in the rock art from Omohe to the La Pérouse area, and even 'Orongo has one example. They may be simple outlines or intricate and beautifully carved examples (Lee 1992:4:65; 4:66; 4:67; 4:68; 4:69; 4:70). At the great canoe panel near Ahu Ra'ai, at least three turtles are associated with the numerous other petroglyph motifs that include canoes, fishhooks, etc. (ibid.: Figure 4:107).

Crab (pikea)

While there are only two known images of crabs in the rock art of Easter Island, they are large complicated designs (1 m by 1.10 cm; and 1.5 x 1.10 cm). One has human attributes that place it into the realm of the supernatural (Lee 1992: Figure 4.85). These two large *pikea* are found together on a hill-

side above 'Anakena and are said to be *aku aku* spirits known as Pikea Uri a Hau Maka o Hiva and Pikea Uri a Tangata Honu. A legend was connected with them and the site where they are carved, but it is now forgotten (ibid:94). When Lavachery (1939: Figures 98, 99) sketched these petroglyphs, he overlooked the human face, navel, hand details on one, and mistakenly stated that crabs do not exist on Easter Island (ibid.:103). Actually, islanders often use small crabs as bait.

Seal (pakia)

The presence of seals on Easter Island is unusual. Smith (1961b:263) reported a leopard seal tooth from an excavation on the north coast and seal bones have been found at 'Anakena (J. M. Ramirez, personal communication, 1988). They are not seen on the island today but as their images are carved on the rocks, they must have been familiar to the Rapanui at one time.

Emory (1947:9) noted a small *marae* in the Tuamotus that was built specially for seals "which appeared very rarely".

A Rapanui legend tells us that the god Tangaroa came to the island disguised as a seal (*pakia)* (Métraux 1971:310-311). The seal had feet and hands like a seal, but his face was that of a man. His protestations that he was not really a seal went unheard and he was killed and put into an oven. When the meat did not cook, the people realized that he was indeed a god.

Twenty-four *pakia* have been recorded in the rock art, nearly all located on the north coast from Mahatua (La Pérouse bay) to 'Anakena. The largest grouping is at the "House of Aio", near Mahatua, where the designs are carved on the *paenga* blocks that formed the foundation for an enormous *hare paenga* (boat-shaped house) (Lee 1992: Figure 4.90). The House of Aio is associated with a bloody legend (Métraux 1971:385-6).

A *pakia* is incised on the inside cave wall at Ana Haruru, a cave inland from La Pérouse Bay (Lee 1992:Figure 4.89). Another one was uncovered at Ahu 'o Rongo at Hangaroa (Huyge and Cauwe 2002); the design was incised on a stone that was found in the ruins of the *ahu.*

Conger, Moray eel (koreha)

Eels (*koreha puhi*, *koreha tapatea, koreha haoko*, *koreha toko-toko ari*, *koreha mingo*, *koreha ruma*) were caught with a snare or with nets (Ayres 1979:68). There are few images of eels in the rock art, but one at Puna Marengo is very large and elaborate and covered with a line of cupules. This petroglyph is associated with a spring (Lee 1992: Figure 4.5). Figure 13.

As for Orongo's Mata Ngarau, famed for its concentration of birdman motifs, *komari*, and Makemake faces, few sea creatures were recorded. One, very eroded and rather 'out of sight' unless one searches for it, was called a "conger" by Lavachery (1939:110); see Lee 1992: Figure 4.44). There are some other wavy eel-like shapes at Mata Ngarau, but these are eroded and could be remnants of something else. Whether or not they were actually intended to represent eels is unknown (See Lee 1992: Figure 5:23, lower right).

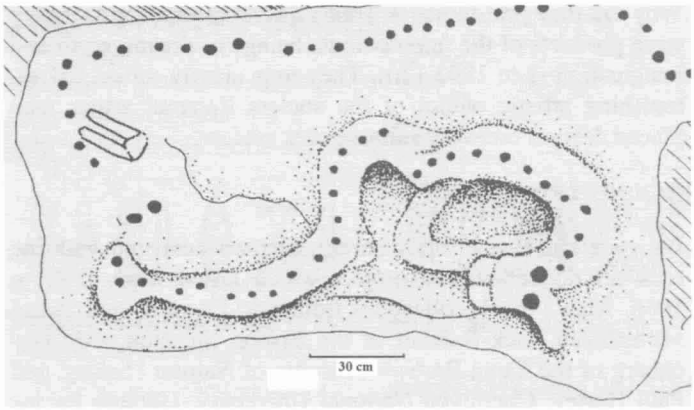

Figure 13. The Puna Marengo petroglyph. Cupules run along the eel-like figure, and also outline the shape of the rock. Note associated *komari* figure, upper left.

CONCLUSION

Rapanui artists carved a variety of sea forms into the island's *papa* and onto island boulders. Why they did so is lost in time. Was it to commemorate a catch, or celebrate the prowess of a fisherman? Was it sympathetic magic, to bring the fish to shore?

As several of the combined human/fish motifs are still known today as being associated with a legend, it is likely that others were also. These combined creatures reflect the general art traditions of Easter Island, such as is seen in the island's woodcarvings where one form "morphs" into another. In particular, the *moko* (lizard) figures have attributes that combine lizard, bird and human. These transformations are known in art studies as "visual punning" (Kurze 1997:38).

Of the total documented examples of fish and other sea creatures the breakdown by types is of interest. Generic "fish" total 119; images of tuna total 17, plus there are four tuna tails; there are 2 sharks; 4 needlefish; 13 octopus motifs, 10 eel; 34 images of turtle, 9 marine mammals (whale, dolphin); 23 seal; and 4 crabs. The combination sea creatures with human attributes total 27 (Lee 1992).

Ayres (1979:68) stated that images of tuna appear in petroglyphs twice as often as do turtles, and he notes that both were reserved for the *ariki.* He added that they are much more common in the rock art than any other marine form represented. The actual petroglyph count from my research (Lee 1992) indicates that turtles are nearly twice as common as are *unmistakable* images of tuna. However, some of the generic fish motifs likely were intended to represent tuna.

When judged against the petroglyph carvings found in the Hawaiian Islands, Tahiti, and the Marquesas, there is little comparison. While an occasional Hawaiian, Tahitian, or Marquesan site may have a turtle petroglyph, and a few fish motifs are known from Tahiti and the Marquesas, there is a significant difference in numbers, types, and especially in the elaboration of the forms. The rock art of Hawai'i, in particular, has practically no fish images (Lee and Stasack 1999).

The sea creatures with anthropomorphized features are not found in the petroglyphic art of other Pacific Islands despite the fact that sea animals were favorite incarnations of the gods in myths throughout the Pacific (Métraux 1971:311).

Why did they proliferate on Easter Island? It may be that they were products of the unconscious, beings of dream, myth and imagination (Lee 1993:120). They may simply reflect the astonishing artistic output of the ancient Rapanui artists who placed designs on every suitable rock surface.

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